



Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman issued the following statement in response to comments made yesterday by U.S. Agriculture Undersecretary Mark Rey at a Wildland Urban Interface conference in Reno. Rey's comments were reported in an Associated Press story by Scott Sonner that ran today. A link to the AP story is available at http://www.mercurynews.com/breakingnews/ci_8479139.

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Contact: Sandy Cooney
(916) 653-9402

California Fires Back at U.S. Forest Service *Roadless Policy is No Impediment to Fighting Fires*

Sacramento – California's Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman today questioned a roadless area speech delivered by U.S. Agriculture Undersecretary Mark Rey as being, "difficult to comprehend." Chrisman said Rey's remarks regarding California roadless areas and fire suppression costs, delivered yesterday during a Wildland Urban Interface conference in Reno, "make no sense at all and are contrary to the facts," since California's roadless area policy provides an exception for the construction of roads to fight fires.

"Since day one we have been clear and consistent with our roadless policy and it has always included an exception for roads to be built to fight fires," Chrisman said. In fact, we have put this in writing several times and it has in turn been acknowledged by the Forest Service. So, it's difficult to comprehend Mark's comments since they are contrary to the facts and to California's roadless area policy."

California's policy, that the Forest Service fails to recognize in management plans for four Southern California forests, specifically allows for roads to be built for fighting fires. Letters exchanged between Chrisman and two Forest Service regional foresters, attest to that fact.

On Feb. 28, Chrisman and California Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. filed a U.S. District court complaint contesting four Southern California forest management plans. The litigation alleges that the Forest Service failed to consider California's roadless area policy in violation of the National Forest Management Act. In addition, the complaint claims that the Forest Service failed to conduct appropriate environmental analysis in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act.

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Attachments available at:

http://www.resources.ca.gov/keeping_californias_roadless_areas_roadless.html

1. Four letters between Secretary Chrisman and U.S. Regional Foresters Blackwell and Weingardt

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814 Ph. 916.653.5656 Fax 916.653.8102 <http://resources.ca.gov>

